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Select Committee on Economic Development in the Inland Empire

*How Earn and Learn Programs Can
Grow a Sustainable Workforce*

*Hearing Synopsis and Policy Recommendations
October, 2021*

Chair, Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez



Select Committee on Economic Development in the Inland Empire

How Earn and Learn Programs Can Grow a Sustainable Workforce

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

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Hearing Synopsis and Policy Recommendations

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Introduction

Chair Freddie Rodriguez, representing Assembly District 52 in the Inland Empire, began the hearing by welcoming and thanking colleagues for their participation. The Inland Empire has often been overlooked when it comes to economic growth opportunities. In January, Chair Rodriguez requested Speaker Rendon create the Committee to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to explore and examine ways to create a more sustainable economy in the Inland Empire. The response from Assembly Members representing the region was overwhelming and indicative that it is a timely effort.

Recently, the state has begun recognizing the vital role the region plays in the state and nation. The Inland Empire is ideally located to house and support a variety of robust and sustainable businesses and occupations, including growing industries such as allied health care, information technology, and biotechnology. The Brookings Institution has estimated 54 percent of workers in the Inland Empire have jobs that provide insufficient pay or benefits and no viable career pathway to more lucrative employment.¹ This deficit worsened during the pandemic. As California rebuilds, now is the time to identify and assess opportunities for the region's growth and lasting prosperity. One such opportunity to move residents into higher paying quality jobs is the earn and learn training model.

Earn and learn is defined in the California Unemployment Insurance Code as compensated workforce training that includes classroom or at the workplace instruction, or both. Types of workforce training that fit this description include apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, some subsidized employment programs, paid internships and externships, and paid project-based learning.

Panel One: Earn and Learn: Available Funding and Opportunities

The first panel was comprised of the Legislative Analyst's Office and the California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards. Participants discussed potential available funding, including new funding opportunities in the California 2021-22 FY budget, for earn and learn programs and apprenticeships. Additionally, discussion included the need for California to create more inclusive policies to reach a broader spectrum of apprentices.

Legislative Analyst's Office

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), California's nonpartisan fiscal and policy advisor, analyzes the state budget each year and provides programmatic expertise. The LAO assists the Legislature by ensuring the executive branch implements policy in an effective and cost efficient manner.² Brian Uhler, Deputy Legislative Analyst with the LAO, provided the following overview of workforce development agencies and available funding.

¹ "Advancing Opportunity in California's Inland Empire," Brookings Institution, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/advancing-opportunity-in-californias-inland-empire/>

² "About Our Office," Legislative Analyst's Office, accessed October 4, 2021, <https://lao.ca.gov/About>.

California's key workforce development agencies include the Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the Employment Development Department Employment Training Panel, and the California Workforce Development Board.

- The California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) was created in 2015 to support new apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high growth sectors such as health care, information technology, and clean energy. CAI grants are intended to support curriculum development and other start-up costs rather than fund ongoing apprenticeship operations. The state has provided a total of \$90 million for this effort. Ongoing annual support for CAI began at \$15 million and this fiscal year, was increased to \$30 million. It is funded by Proposition 98 dollars, overseen by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, and available to school districts and colleges.
- Related Supplemental Instruction is a longstanding program that can reimburse apprenticeship sponsors for a portion of their instructional costs. Sponsors are reimbursed at an hourly rate, which is currently \$6.77, and must partner with a school or community college district to qualify for these funds. It should be noted that apprenticeship sponsors typically cover the majority of costs related to instruction and training.
- The Strong Workforce Program was created to improve the availability and quality of career technical education programs and intended to support smaller training class sizes, equipment costs, and regional planning and coordination. Budget language passed this year additionally allows colleges to use this funding for work-based learning purposes, including paid internships. The 2021-22 budget allocated \$290 million ongoing for the program, representing a \$42 million increase over the last fiscal year allocation.
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) provides monthly cash grants to low-income families with children. Most adult recipients are required to work or participate in workforce training. The CalWORKs subsidized employment program is allocated approximately \$180 million each year.

Funding for earn and learn programs is distributed across various state entities. For the 2021-22 fiscal year, an overall \$1.175 billion was allocated toward workforce development agencies, higher education institutions, and the Department of Social Services, which administers the CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Programs. \$370 million was appropriated for workforce development, \$625 million to higher education, and \$180 million to the Department of Social Services.

- Workforce Development (\$370 million)
 - California Workforce Development Board, High Road Training Partnerships (\$125 million)
 - Employment Development Department, Employment Training Panel incumbent worker training grants (\$143 million)

- California Workforce Development Board, High Road Training Partnerships collaboration with community colleges (\$50 million)
- Employment Development Department, Employment Training Panel collaboration with community colleges (\$42 million)
- California Workforce Development Board, residential construction apprenticeships (\$10 million)
- Higher Education (\$625 million)
 - CCC, Strong Workforce Program (\$290 million)
 - California Student Aid Commission, Learning-Aligned Employment Program (\$200 million)
 - CCC, Related and Supplemental Instruction (\$68 million)
 - CCC, California Apprenticeship Initiative (\$30 million)
 - University of California, California Institutes for Science Innovation (\$20 million)
 - CCC, High Road Training Partnerships and Regional Partnerships (\$20 million)
- Department of Social Services CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Programs (\$180 million)

California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards

The Division of Apprenticeship Standards (Division) at the Department of Industrial Relations is charged with creating opportunities for people to obtain skills that lead to well-paying employment and providing employers with a skilled workforce. In doing so, the intent is to strengthen the state's economy by administering apprenticeship laws and enforcing standards regarding wages, hours, working conditions, and specific skills required for state certification as a journey person in an occupation that is appropriate for apprenticeship.³ The Division certifies and oversees all apprenticeship programs in the state and accepts and reviews applications for new apprenticeship programs.

The Division also administers funding and matches workers with employers seeking skilled employees with a focus on strengthening the alliance between industry, labor, education, and government. The goal is to support the recruitment of workers into apprenticeship programs to teach them necessary skills and provide economic advancement. Because it is partly funded and driven by industries and industry needs, the apprenticeship system provides an effective balance between learning by doing, theoretical instruction, and providing workers with marketable skills.

Eric Rood is the Chief of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards within the Department of Industrial Relations. He also serves as Secretary for the California Apprenticeship Council and Secretary for the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA), which was created to extend apprenticeship beyond traditionally covered industries to industries like tech,

³ "About the Division of Apprenticeship Standards," California Department of Industrial Relations, accessed October 4, 2021, https://www.dir.ca.gov/das/das_overview.html.

finance, and health care to name a few. Mr. Rood explained how registered apprenticeship programs can be a solution to California's looming crisis of insufficient numbers of allied health care workers and how it can address workforce needs of public and private employers. Apprentices receive about 144 hours of classroom or online instruction and receive one wage increase during their training. The apprenticeships can last one to five years depending on the complexity of the occupation. Based on conservative 2014 estimates, Mr. Rood stated the Inland Empire would require 70,000 new allied health care workers by 2024. To meet this need, Mr. Rood recommended assessing the current supply of allied health care professionals and removing key barriers to meet the estimated supply shortage.

Demographically, more attention should be directed toward higher wage occupations and there should be more focused recruitment of diverse populations. Currently, only seven percent of registered apprentices are women. As it stands, lower wage occupations are predominantly filled by women of color in part time capacities. Utilizing existing health care experience, such as the skills of medical assistants and in-home health care workers and upskilling, could lead to full time positions, health benefits, and family sustaining wages. Efforts such as AB 1273 (Rodriguez, Chapter 477, Statutes of 2021) helped remove artificial barriers to success and should be encouraged. However, Proposition 209 poses challenges by not allowing agencies to recruit program participants based upon ethnicity or gender.

The Division has been working to expand apprenticeship programs in the Inland Empire. Of the new funding, there is no specified regional distribution. Thus far, the region has only received about ten percent of previously allocated funding. While the need exists for employers to attract quality workers, there is a question whether these funds are expended in the Inland Empire in proportion to need. Scaling up and expanding programs could be achieved if additional funding were targeted to the region.

Policy Recommendations

CAI

The LAO and Chancellor's Office included testimony regarding CAI, created in 2015 to support new apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high growth sectors such as health care, information technology, and clean energy. The state has provided a total of \$90 million for this effort. Ongoing annual support for CAI began at \$15 million and this fiscal year, and was increased to \$30 million this year. As previously noted, it is funded by Proposition 98 dollars, overseen by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, and available to school districts and colleges. **The Legislature should consider requesting an accounting of CAI dollars spent and outcomes resulting from those expenditures and should determine if there are programmatic issues that need to be addressed to ensure community colleges can allocate these funds to the areas of highest need and seek to remove barriers if they exist.**

Strong Workforce Program

The Strong Workforce Program is intended to support smaller training class sizes, equipment costs, and regional planning and coordination. Budget language passed this year additionally allows colleges to use this funding for work-based learning purposes, including paid internships.

The 2021-22 budget allocated \$290 million ongoing for the program, representing a \$42 million increase over the last fiscal year allocation. **The Legislature may wish to request a report regarding the spending by region and school site since the program's inception and determine the outcomes of workers trained and employed through the use of the funding.**

CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Programs

CalWORKs provides monthly cash grants to low-income families with children. Most adult recipients are required to work or participate in workforce training. The CalWORKs subsidized employment program is allocated approximately \$180 million each year. **The Legislature may wish to examine whether there is an annual report of these expenditures, assess whether the Inland Empire is receiving a proportionate share, and if there are any metrics to evaluate the success of the programs and determine if there are challenges that need to be addressed via legislation.**

Recruiting More Women Apprentices

Mr. Rood testified to the existing challenge Proposition 209 has had on agencies like his, where there is a need to identify and attract specific genders and ethnicities. **The Legislature may wish to examine whether funding these efforts with federal dollars would allow the state to target recruitment and registration of underserved women and minorities.** Certainly, addressing economic inequality could likewise provide necessary inclusion of women and minorities.

Panel Two: Successful Models and How to Expand Earn and Learn Partnerships

The second panel was comprised of Futuro Health, a model organization for developing successful earn and learn partnerships, and the Office of the Chancellor of California Community Colleges. Participants learned the benefits of workforce development partnerships, examples of successful partnerships, and how those partnerships have contributed to the Inland Empire economy. The discussion also included how to further encourage and develop these partnerships in the region.

Futuro Health

Futuro Health seeks to improve the health and wealth of communities by fostering the largest network of credentialed allied healthcare workers in the nation. By investing in education and skills training and retraining for health care workers, they are able to achieve better paying jobs for workers, care for patients, and a skilled workforce for employers.

Futuro Health's nonprofit mission is to improve the health and wealth of communities by growing the largest network of credentialed allied health workers in the nation, beginning in California. In partnership with a diverse ecosystem, the organization builds a path for student success from awareness, recruitment, training, to work-based learning experiences. Futuro is a unique nonprofit established with a commitment of \$130 million by an employer, Kaiser Permanente, and SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West. In California alone, the looming demand for these workers is approximately 500,000 by 2024, with an annual demand of 65,000+ workers. Despite the pandemic, Futuro, which began in January 2020, is on track to

reach the goal of training, credentialing, and placing in employment 10,000 allied health care workers by 2024.

Joy Hermesen, Director of Innovative Partnerships with Futuro Health, provided testimony that included examples of successful partnerships, such as a virtual marketing internship that ties Barstow College and Copper Mountain College with small businesses in the Inland Empire to pilot social media and digital analytic skills for students to help small businesses while gaining experience in the field. Another example is the Human Touch Healthcare program, developed to transition displaced hospitality and tourism workers into healthcare and adjacent fields. Having built many such partnerships, Ms. Hermesen testified that this is an ideal time to grow apprenticeships and make transformative policy changes to encourage this growth.

Ms. Hermesen stressed their success is due intentionally planning the program in a way that was already inclusive, agile, and properly scaled. All students thus far have enjoyed full scholarships, allowing them to better focus on curriculum and training. In 2020-21, Futuro Health's student population in education paths towards a credential represented the following demographic breakdown:

- 78% Female, 22% Male, <1% non-binary, <1% prefer not to say
- 46% Latinx, 21% Black/African American, 11% White, 12% Asian, 10% Other
- Average age: 30 years old
- 36% bilingual

From the perspective of healthcare equity, outreach and recruitment of diverse students is fundamental. A diverse health care industry is advantageous to the community, provides access to family sustaining wages in the health care fields, and provides patients with an elevated level of cultural competency. Futuro works with SEIU-UHW and other community based organizations, local health systems, and education providers to provide informational sessions, pre-student orientations, social media, emails, targeted outreach campaigns, and referral programs. New ways to reach potential students are also being assessed.

Once students are recruited, Futuro provides a navigator to assist them in finding their educational pathway based on their interests, lend encouragement throughout their educational program and training, and provide support along every step of the journey using engagement strategies that include digital nudging, text support, and test preparation for licensing exams. At the end of this process is a job for the student and an industry recognized credential to make the individual more employable. Finally, the employment outcomes of these trainees can be monitored and partnerships with employers can be entered into for upskilling employees.

California Community Colleges

The California Community College Chancellor's Office oversees California's 116 two-year California Community Colleges and provides state-funded grants to eligible work-based learning programs. Approximately 2.1 million students attend CCCs, some of whom participate in a

variety of workforce development programs and initiatives led by its Workforce and Economic Development Division. The funds the state provides to the Chancellor's Office are a key component of CAI, the Strong Workforce Program, and the CCC's Guided Pathways Program, which aims to develop structured, efficient, academic course sequences for entering students.⁴

Notably in the Inland Empire, Chaffey Community College in Rancho Cucamonga has created a public-private partnership in the CCC system with the InTech Welding Center that has garnered national praise. Chaffey InTech welding center provides a wide array of training, including construction and forklift operation, computer skills, mechatronics/industrial automation, and additive manufacturing. The technical training and professional development offered through the partnership has led to nationally recognized certifications and good paying careers for its participants. Since InTech's establishment in 2016, it has served more than 1,700 individuals and approximately 150 employers.⁵

David O'Brien, Community College Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, has served as Vice Chancellor for Government Relations for the CCC Chancellor's Office since April of 2020. Vice Chancellor O'Brien thanked the Chair for his authorship of AB 1273 (Chapter 477, Statutes of 2021), relative to earn and learn opportunities. Vice Chancellor O'Brien provided testimony relative to ensuring flexibility of earn and learn models, incentives, expansion of programs in non-traditional industries, the benefit of CCC programs to students, and improved cross-agency collaboration. Below is a synopsis of the Vice Chancellor's testimony.

- Ensuring flexibility. A key component of a successful earn and learn model is its flexibility. The Vice-Chancellor recommended the scope of the type of businesses needs to be expanded because we can no longer assume only large businesses can meet workforce needs. Existing standards set a high bar that are challenging for some businesses to meet. Because business partnerships are a necessary components of an earn and learn program, not as many CCCs have sufficient Partnerships to offer new programs. The Vice Chancellor stated CAI does provide seed funding to establish new programs, but a number are having a difficult time sustaining the program beyond the grant period. The Legislature may wish to inquire how many programs there are and in what industries.
- Building in effective incentives. To encourage employers to participate in earn and learn programs, which we know benefit students and employers alike, the right types of incentives are necessary. Payroll tax breaks are helpful to attract businesses, as are subsidized wages for students.

⁴ "The 2021-22 Budget: California Community Colleges: Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning," Legislative Analyst's Office, February 16, 2021, accessed October 4, 2021, https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4372#Apprenticeships_and_Work.2011Based_Learning.

⁵ "About InTech," Chaffey College Industrial Technical Learning Center, accessed October 4, 2021, <https://intechcenter.org/about/>.

- Expanding apprenticeships in non-traditional industries. A priority of the CCC Chancellor's Office is expanding earn and learn programs beyond traditional industries and trades. Members cautioned panelists during the hearing that greater attention needs to be paid to non-traditional sectors that would serve women and minorities.
- Earn and learn as an alternative to for-profits. While for-profit schools have a large presence in the Inland Empire, the Vice-Chancellor shared they leave students in debt. He further stated CCC earn and learn programs provide a counterbalance by offering low-cost, high-quality workforce training leading to well-paying jobs.
- Cross-agency collaboration. Last, the Vice Chancellor recommended, for earn and learn programs to maximize their potential, greater collaboration across the various public agencies to reduce duplication, leverage each other's resources, and better utilize funds. For example, CCC funding supports training and education, basic needs, and financial aid, and would be even more effective coupled with Labor funding that can subsidize wages and share data to extend more services to help those seeking opportunities.

Policy Recommendations

Attract Smaller Employers

Ms. Hermesen alluded to, and the Vice-Chancellor stated, flexibility is a key component of a successful earn and learn model. For employers, the scope of the type of businesses could be examined to encompass small businesses. Existing standards set a high bar that are challenging for some businesses to meet. Labor organizations can play an important role in facilitating multiple smaller employers together to meet workforce needs. Because business partnership are a necessary component of an earn and learn program, not as many CCCs are able to offer new programs.

The Legislature may wish to consider one area of opportunity for change could be revisiting the provisions of Related Supplemental Instruction. This longstanding program reimburses employers and apprenticeship sponsors for a portion of their instructional costs.

Apprenticeship sponsors typically cover the majority of instruction and training costs. They were reimbursed at an hourly rate of \$6.77, and must partner with a school or community college district to qualify for these funds.

Flexibility is a key component of earn and learn models, however, developing education to match industry needs is an expensive and time intensive process. **The Legislature may wish to considered directing the Chancellor's Office to review and recommend ways in which the curriculum development process can better meet the flexible needs of industry.**

As the Vice-Chancellor recognized, AB 1273 addressed some of the barriers to earn and learn programs due to state licensing requirements. However, individual community colleges raised concerns about the impact of earn and learn programs on their program accreditation standards, which often prohibit earn and learn programs. These program accreditation standards often cost in the thousands of dollars, taking away resources that could help support

students and grow earn and learn programs. **The Legislature may wish to consider whether the state should continue to use public dollars to pay for program accreditations that prohibit the state's progress towards the goal of growing earn and learn programs.**

Public Comment

Bekka Rosenbaum, Chief Strategy Officer, Jewish Vocational Services

Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) is a non-profit, non-sectarian workforce development agency serving over 100,000 people during their tenure. Focused on economic mobility and racial equity, JVS helps people build relevant skills and connect to good jobs with upward economic mobility. This includes a focus on healthcare, technology, professional services, and skilled trades, including a project named "IE Works," focused on creating apprenticeship programming in the water-wastewater industry in the Inland Empire. JVS's healthcare programs, which serve predominantly women of color without college degrees, refresh skills through targeted classroom training and placed participants in paid clinical externships, where they practice skills just refreshed in the classroom. Graduates of the program continually cite the paid work experience as a key contributor of their success.

Another example JVS cited is the Medical Administrative Assistant training program, which enrolls CalWorks recipients into a six-month training that, upon completion, transitions students into jobs earning between \$25 to \$28 per hour. Graduate feedback indicates earning a wage during training, not only allowed them to support themselves and dependents and pay off debts that kept them in the cycle of poverty, but offered dignity by making them feel like true employees with something of value to offer. JVS receives thousands of applications from people who are motivated, reflect California's diverse population, and do not have the luxury of not having an income while they invest in learning skills to grow their careers. Those who are able to participate benefit from earn and learn models. The income they earn while training allows them to continue to care for themselves and dependents, keeps them focused on their goals, allows them to learn effectively, and provides them the dignity of pay for their work while they gain skills.

Sandra Sisco, Director of Economic Development and INTECH Center, Chaffey Community College

The INTECH Center was established in 2016 as the first public private partnership in the California Community College system, providing training for careers with family sustaining wages. Each year, INTECH trains over one thousand incumbent workers, registered apprentices, and more than 100 underemployed and dislocated workers in the Inland Empire. INTECH has received national recognition for its work.

The INTECH apprenticeship programs continue to expand in the region and empower trainees through tutoring assistance and tuition assistance. As a result, these skilled graduates are highly sought after. Employers consistently seek graduates of these programs and there is a constant need for more graduates to enter the workforce.

Panelist Biographies

The Chair would like to thank the following panelists for their participation and looks forward to working with each of them in future.

Brian Uhler, Deputy Legislative Analyst, LAO

Mr. Uhler manages a team that advises the Legislature on economic, tax, and labor policy. Brian joined the LAO in January 2011 and has worked in a variety of issue areas during his tenure, including economic development, taxation, housing, local government, labor, and human services.

Eric Rood, Chief, Division of Apprenticeship Standards, Department of Industrial Relations

In 2018, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Mr. Rood as Chief of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. Eric is currently serving in this role for Governor Gavin Newsom. Eric has served Californians the past 28 years in various roles, including seven years as the Assistant Chief Labor Commissioner. Eric currently serves as Secretary for the California Apprenticeship Council and Secretary for the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship. Eric enjoys traveling, playing golf, and watching his daughter play volleyball during his downtime.

Joy Hermesen, Director of Innovative Partnerships, Futuro Health

Ms. Hermesen is an experienced workforce innovation solutions architect, developing strategic partnerships across systems to help students launch their careers. Joy's expertise comes from leading successful teams in public and private organizations. She recently built innovative work-based learning internships, apprenticeship pathways and industry partnerships as the Statewide Director in the Workforce Economic Development Division at the CA Community Colleges. She also has been Director of Operations, Director of HR & Strategy, Director of Training & Development and Director of Employee Engagement & Community Relations from Fortune 500 companies to local, family-owned companies.

Joy earned her master's degree in business administration from the UC Davis Graduate School of Management, and her bachelor's degree in political science at UC Davis. She is an alumna of the Sacramento Entrepreneurship Academy. She has served as a faculty member at Humboldt State University and Santa Rosa Junior College. She also has served as president on several boards, including the UCD GSM Alumni Association and Girls on the Run Sonoma County.

David O'Brien, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, California Community College Chancellor's Office

Vice Chancellor O'Brien has served in his current capacity since April of 2020. In this role, he oversees a division responsible for formulating and advancing the legislative agenda of the California Community Colleges and represents the Chancellor's Office before the Legislature and executive branch of the state and federal governments.

Prior to joining the Chancellor's Office in April 2020, he served as Director of Government Affairs for the California Student Aid Commission since October 2016, a role that placed him as the commission's primary liaison to the state Legislature, the Governor's Office, the California

Department of Finance, and other agencies on matters related to financial aid and college affordability. This made him a critical figure in the commission's efforts to reform and expand California's financial aid programs. Prior to joining the Student Aid Commission, Vice Chancellor O'Brien worked for nearly five years as a legislative manager for the California Department of State Hospitals, a legislative analyst for the state Department of Mental Health and as a legislative assistant for the California Environmental Protection Agency. He has a bachelor's degree in political science and government from California State University, Sacramento, and lives in West Sacramento with his wife, a public school teacher.

Glossary

Apprenticeship

Classroom and/or online instruction with on the job training in specific fields.

Incumbent Worker Training

Employer provided subject area training for existing employees often to promote to a more advanced position.

Paid Internships and Externships

Pairing students with short term paid work to provide work experience.

Paid Project-Based Learning

Student group projects to develop and complete a project often with the guidance of a sponsor organization.

Pre-Apprenticeship

Short term training to prepare a student before an apprenticeship program.

Subsidized Employment Programs

Job programs in which a third party covers a portion of wages to encourage employers to hire and retain workers.

Acknowledgements

Chair Rodriguez would like to thank Members and participants for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend and engage in meaningful discussion. Additionally, he would like to thank the Speaker and his staff, committee support staff, and sergeants for their valuable input and dedication to ensuring the safety of all parties.